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## RESEARCH IN PSYCHIATRY.

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Over fifteen hundred persons went down in the *Titanic*. This is less by 500 than the number of persons committed to the institutions of the insane in the State of Illinois in one year. The whole world is aroused to prevent the repetition of a similar nautical calamity. Nevertheless the whole world is committing to the institutions for the insane within the dominions of civilized countries, not less than 80,000 citizens a year from every walk of life, from the rich and the poor, from the educated and the uneducated, and with almost equal proportions. Moreover, this has been going on for fifty years, and yet no vigorous, rational, adequate methods have been instituted or practised, designed to discover the causes of the diseases or physical conditions which lie at the bottom of insanity.

I know very well that the *Zeitgeist*, the tendency of the time is toward the mystical and the occult. Mysticism has entered mathematics and almost attained the position which it occupied among the preChristian Egyptians. Mysticism has come into physics, and it was necessary at the last meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Science for Magie to devote a large part of his address to combating the occult spirit in physics. Mysticism has

come into natural philosophy, and Wilhelm Fliess has issued a book on a mystical family substance and its rhythmical fluctuations upward toward genius or health, and downward toward perversion or disease. By this system of natural philosophy, Siegmund would have us treat the father, the mother, the uncles, and the aunts when we are called to see a child suffering from hives or headache.

During these fifty years the alienist and the philanthropist have had their way with the institutions for the insane, and with the departments of charities and correction. It is now time for the scientist and the physician to take hold of the problems of insanity.

If, as rational and scientific men we wish to discover the causes of insanity, we ought to pursue the same methods which have been rewarded by success in discovering the causes of other afflictions of mankind. We should do this in spite of any tendency of the time toward any other method. We should not be led astray by the success of occultism in building temples or in curing complaints.

It is perfectly legitimate to experiment in the crude and single handed manner which brought immunity against smallpox; it is perfectly legitimate to use remedies which are applied empirically or by accident, as mercury has been used against syphilis, but it is far more hopeful to undertake such a systematic course of investigation as will lead to the discovery of the cause of the disease, such as Koch instituted in tuberculosis, and such as the various laboratories have undertaken in investigating the sleeping sickness and other tropical diseases.

Then research for psychiatry ought to be undertaken according to the clinical method of Sydenham

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*Holmes: Research in Psychiatry.*

and the laboratory method of Metchnikoff, and every State should expend for research, not less than ten per cent. of the appropriations which are so liberally made for custody and confinement.

In the early explorations into disease it was possible for a man to make a great discovery single handed, but any reasonable, rational research for psychiatry must be a research *en masse*. A squad of research men must pursue a truth down into this dense and dark continent of our ignorance. Every clinical technologist should do his part,—the chemist in his department, the experimental biologist in his department, the biochemist, the biometrician, the serologist, and the cytologist in their several departments, to bring about the subjugation of parallel lines of Nature's intrenchment against our science.

Probably the first department of a laboratory of research should be manned by a skillful bibliographer. At the present time the library has reached such proportions and complexity, that no individual who has exacting duties at the laboratory desk or in the clinical laboratory can possibly find the time for bibliographical research. This must be in the hands of an expert in his own department. He must have at his hand, not only the current literature of our periodicals, but he must also have accessible the bibliographies of the past.

The workers in a laboratory of psychiatry need to have at their disposal the literature of modern science, and the location of such a library will determine the proper location of a laboratory of psychiatry; hence it appears at the very onset that an efficient laboratory for psychiatry must be placed where libraries already exist. This would naturally bring the laboratory to the university, or, at least, to the largest cities in the State.

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The number of workers in a laboratory of psychiatry ought to be sufficient to cover the whole field of the natural sciences, with an expert at the head of each department, and special workers under each of these heads.

Thus again, it seems that such a corps of experts could be found in each of the universities. They would be men who had arrived at a prominence in their profession, which would save the workers time and effort by their advice and by the conception which their position and attainments afforded.

The number of men who are prepared for such a laboratory is almost unlimited, provided they are selected from the universities at a sufficiently early age. All the great research men have come from their general laboratory training into their special field early in life. The fact that research in psychiatry has never been seriously and aggressively undertaken has allowed this department of medicine to escape the attention of prospective research men. In France the *Prix de la Société médico-psychologique* for the year 1912 amounts to only 2,400 francs, and there is no psychiatric laboratory similar to that of Metchnikoff in which research in this direction is exclusively encouraged. A body of research men cannot be built up by offering rewards such as the Nobel prize, because the only persons fitted to undertake the work must necessarily be young, and dependent upon a salary for their support. The prize cannot be given to a squad, even though the squad should attain an unaided and undisputed achievement; the reward will eventually come to the state and society as a whole, and the research men should be placed on a civil service basis, with a growing salary and an adequate pension in case of disability. Bacteriology

and vivisection experiments are dangerous occupations, and the risk to the investigator is a matter of lamentable and common knowledge.

If private initiative can be useful in any way in establishing a laboratory of psychiatry it must do so with the full cooperation of all the existing endowments of the university, and with a complete cooperation with a neighboring institution for the insane. Not less than eight scholarships with a value of \$2,000 a year for salaries, can hope to make even a beginning in the research which shall dissipate our ignorance of the etiology of even one of the insanities. Such a corps could be attached to a university like that of the University of Chicago, but it would necessitate the building of an institution for the insane with a full corps of physicians and nurses adequate for the accommodation of twenty or thirty patients of a single clinical disease. Moreover, this institution, on account of the monopoly which the State maintains in the custody of the insane, would necessarily be under State supervision.

In the States of California and Wisconsin ideal conditions exist for the establishment of a laboratory of psychiatry in the university of the State, with full cooperation with the institutions for the insane located in the immediate vicinity, in pursuing this promising research. In the State of Illinois, the State university is almost out of the question, on account of its remoteness from the institutions of custody. It is likely that Dunning will soon be rehabilitated and made one of the principal asylums of the State. It is more than likely that an aroused public conscience will demand that a reception hospital be established in the city of Chicago for the uncommitted insane, and this might be

attached to and be a part of a hospital for research. The advantages of the great John Crerar Library and the aggregation of proponent scientists at the University of Chicago would make this combination an ideal one, provided the prerequisite cooperation could be established between the University of Chicago and the Board of Administration of the State.

The very atmosphere of research which surrounds the university, and the highly optimistic spirit of the city of Chicago itself, would promise well for the enthusiasm of laboratory workers, who are so often depressed by the discouragement which naturally attends protracted labor upon a false and fruitless lead.

When the State has devoted a tithe of the energy now expended in custody and confinement upon research and cure, when all natural, rational avenues for disease have been followed out, and no physical basis of such long lasting conditions as dementia præcox have been discovered, then it seems to me that every good citizen, that every rational physician, that every sociologist and humanitarian would unite with me in such an effort as will make it possible to obtain for these afflicted ones the remedy of euthanasia. By the law of equity which provides a remedy or attempts to provide a remedy for all legal torts, it ought to be possible for the friends of the committed insane to appear in court and secure an order which would command the sheriff or his deputy to execute the hopelessly insane and remove them from the consuming custody of the State, from their own hopeless calamity, and give their relatives and friends the consolation of the end.

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